BULLYING PREVENTION POLICY

PURPOSE

Plenty Parklands Primary School is committed to providing a safe and respectful learning environment where bullying will not be tolerated. In shaping the culture of PPPS we have strong values, policies, processes and strategies in place for responding to bullying and unacceptable behaviour. The school will provide a positive culture based on our values of *a fair go for all, respect, care, trust, honesty,* and *personal achievement,* where bullying is not accepted.

This culture aims to ensure that all will have the right of respect from others and the responsibility to show respect to others, the right to learn or to teach, and the right to feel safe and secure in the school environment at all times.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- explain the definition of bullying so that there is shared understanding amongst all members of the Plenty Parklands Primary School community
- make clear that no form of bullying at Plenty Parklands Primary School will not be tolerated
- outline the strategies and programs in place at Plenty Parklands Primary School to build a positive school culture and prevent bullying behaviour
- ask that everyone in our school community be alert to signs and evidence of bullying behaviour, and understands the importance of reporting bullying behaviour to school staff
- ensure that all reported incidents of bullying are appropriately investigated and addressed
- ensure that support is provided to students who may be affected by bullying behaviour (including targets, bystanders, witnesses and students engaging in bullying behaviour
- seek parental and peer group support in addressing and preventing bullying behaviour at Plenty Parklands Primary School
- empower students to recognise, respond and report bullying behaviour as this is essential to help prevent bullying.

When responding to bullying behaviour, Plenty Parklands Primary School aims to:

- be proportionate, consistent and responsive
- find a constructive solution for everyone
- stop the bullying from happening again
- restore the relationships between the students involved.

Plenty Parklands Primary School acknowledges that school staff owe a duty of care to students to take reasonable steps to reduce the risk of reasonably foreseeable harm, which can include harm that may be caused by bullying behaviour.

SCOPE

This policy addresses how Plenty Parklands Primary School aims to prevent, address and respond to student bullying behaviour. Plenty Parklands Primary School recognises that there are many other types of inappropriate student behaviours that do not meet the definition of bullying which are also unacceptable at our school. These other inappropriate behaviours will be managed in accordance with our *Student Code of Conduct, Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy* and *Inclusion and Diversity policy*.

This policy applies to all school activities, including camps and excursions.

POLICY

Definitions

Bullying

In 2018 the Education Council of the Council of Australian Governments endorsed the following definition of bullying for use by all Australian schools:

> *Bullying is an ongoing and deliberate misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that intends to cause physical, social and/or psychological harm. It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power, or perceived power, over one or more persons who feel unable to stop it from happening.*
>
> *Bullying can happen in person or online, via various digital platforms and devices and it can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert). Bullying behaviour is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time, for example, through sharing of digital records.*
>
> *Bullying of any form or for any reason can have immediate, medium and long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders. Single incidents and conflict or fights between equals, whether in person or online, are not defined as bullying.*

Bullying has three main features:

- It involves a misuse of power in a relationship
- It is ongoing and repeated, and
- It involves behaviours that can cause harm.

There are four main types of bullying behaviour:

- Physical – examples include hitting, pushing, shoving or intimidating or otherwise physically hurting another person, damaging or stealing their belongings. It includes threats of violence.
- Verbal/written – examples include name-calling or insulting someone about an attribute, quality or personal characteristic.
- Social (sometimes called relational or emotional bullying) – examples include deliberately excluding someone, spreading rumours, sharing information that will have a harmful effect on the other person and/or damaging a person's social reputation or social acceptance.
- Cyberbullying – any form of bullying behaviour that occurs online or via a mobile device. It can be verbal or written, and can include threats of violence as well as images, videos and/or audio.

Bullying can be a form of racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia or other type of social prejudice when the behaviour is targeted at an individual or group because of a personal characteristic, such as race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability.

Other distressing and inappropriate behaviours

Many distressing and inappropriate behaviours may not constitute bullying even though they are unpleasant. Students who are involved in or who witness any distressing and inappropriate behaviours should report their concerns to school staff and our school will follow the *Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy* and this *Bullying Prevention Policy* where the behaviour constitutes bullying.

Mutual conflict involves an argument or disagreement between people with no imbalance of power. In incidents of mutual conflict, generally, both parties are upset and usually both want a resolution to the issue. Unresolved mutual conflict can develop into bullying if one of the parties targets the other repeatedly in retaliation.

Social rejection or dislike is not bullying unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.

Single-episode acts of nastiness or physical aggression are not the same as bullying. However, single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression are not acceptable behaviours at our school and may have serious consequences for students engaging in this behaviour. Plenty Parklands Primary School will use its *Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy* to guide a response to single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression.

Harassment is language or actions that are demeaning, offensive or intimidating to a person. It can take many forms, including sexual and/or disability harassment.

Discrimination is behaviour that treats someone unfavourably because of a personal characteristic (for example, race, religious belief or activity, disability, sex or intersex status, gender identity or sexual orientation).

Discrimination, harassment, and any other inappropriate behaviour is not tolerated at our school and there may be serious consequences for students engaging in this behaviour. This includes any form of racism, religious or disability discrimination, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, or any other behaviour that targets an individual or group. Further information about discrimination and harassment, including definitions, is set out in our Inclusion and Diversity Policy.

Bullying Prevention

Plenty Parklands Primary School has a number of programs and strategies in place to build a positive and inclusive school culture and relationships to promote wellbeing. We strive to foster a school culture that prevents bullying behaviour by modelling our values of *respect, honesty, care, trust, personal achievement* and *a fair go for all* and by encouraging and teaching behaviour that demonstrates these values, and reflects acceptance and kindness.

Bullying prevention at Plenty Parklands Primary School is proactive and is supported by research that indicates that a whole school, multifaceted approach is the most effect way to prevent and address bullying.

At our school:

- We have a positive school environment that provides safety, security and support for students and promotes positive relationships and wellbeing, with a focus on examples of students living by the values.
- We implement programs and initiatives that are relevant to preventing and addressing bullying and help us to build a positive, respectful and inclusive school climate. These programs include Respectful Relationships, Bully Stoppers, eSafety online resources and eSmart.
- We strive to build strong partnerships between the school, families and the broader community that means all members work together to ensure the safety of students.
- We celebrate the diverse backgrounds of members of our school community and teach multicultural education, including Aboriginal History, to promote mutual respect and social cohesion.
- Teachers are expected to incorporate classroom management strategies that discourage bullying and promote positive behaviour.
- The implementation of bullying prevention programs ensure students have both a voice and meaningful involvement in school based age appropriate activities that address and respond to bullying.
- In the classroom, our social and emotional learning curriculum teaches students what constitutes bullying and how to respond to bullying behaviour assertively. This promotes resilience, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving.
- Students are encouraged to look out for each other and to talk to teachers and older peers about any bullying they have experienced or witnessed.
- We promote upstander behaviour as a way of empowering our students to positively and safely take appropriate action when they see or hear of a peer being bullied.
- Staff are provided with professional learning opportunities relating to all forms of bullying, including cyberbullying.
- We aim to educate the community about the seriousness of cyberbullying.
- CyberSafety forms part of each child's eLearning curriculum.
- The P-6 Buddy program encourages positive relationships between students in different year levels. We seek to empower students to be confident communicators and to resolve conflict in a non aggressive and constructive way.
- We restrict the use of mobile devices by students to outside school hours.
- We participate in the National Day of Action against Bullying and Violence.

For further information about our engagement and wellbeing initiatives, please see our *Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy*.

Incident Response

Reporting concerns

Bullying is not tolerated at our school. We ensure bullying behaviour is identified and addressed with appropriate and proportionate consequences. Bullying complaints will be taken seriously and responded to sensitively at our school.

Students who may be experiencing bullying behaviour, or students who have witnessed bullying behaviour, are encouraged to report their concerns to school staff or another trusted adult as soon as possible. This report can be to their classroom teacher or any trusted member of staff. Students can also seek the support of a trusted friend to accompany them when they report.

Our ability to effectively reduce and eliminate bullying behaviour is greatly affected by students and/or parents and carers reporting concerning behaviour as soon as possible, so that the responses implemented by Plenty Parklands Primary School are timely and appropriate in the circumstances.

Parents or carers who may have concerns that their child is involved in, or has witnessed bullying behaviour, at Plenty Parklands Primary School, should contact their child's teacher.

Investigations

When notified of alleged bullying behaviour, school staff are required to:

1. record the details of the allegations in Compass; and
2. inform the relevant staff members - class teacher, year level leader, Assistant Principal and Principal

Staff are responsible for investigating allegations of bullying in a timely and sensitive manner. To appropriately investigate an allegation of bullying, the staff member is required to:

- speak to the students involved in the allegations, individually or in pairs as appropriate, including the target/s, the students allegedly engaging in bullying behaviour/s and any witnesses to the incidents. This is often best done by obtaining written statements from all or any of the above.
- speak to the teachers of the students involved
- speak to the parents/carers of the students involved
- take detailed notes of all discussions for future reference

All communication within the course of investigating an allegation of bullying will be managed sensitively. Investigations will be completed as quickly as possible to allow for the behaviours to be addressed in a timely manner.

The objective of completing a thorough investigation into the circumstances of alleged bullying behaviour is to determine the nature of the conduct and the students involved. A thorough understanding of the alleged bullying will inform staff about how to most effectively implement an appropriate response to that behaviour.
Parents will be informed and/or included in the process.
Serious bullying, including serious cyberbullying, is a criminal offence and may be referred to Victoria Police. For more information, see: Brodie's Law.

Responses to bullying behaviours

When the staff member has sufficient information to understand the circumstances of the alleged bullying and the students involved, a number of strategies may be implemented to address the behaviour and support affected students. This would be done in consultation with the classroom teacher, year level leader, Assistant Principal and Principal.

There are a number of factors that will be considered when determining the most appropriate response to the behaviour. When making a decision about how to respond to bullying behaviour, Plenty Parklands Primary School will consider:

- the age, maturity and individual circumstances of the students involved
- the severity and frequency of the bullying, and the impact it has had on the target student
- whether the student/s engaging in bullying behaviour have displayed similar behaviour before
- whether the bullying took place in a group or one to one context
- whether the student/s engaging in bullying behaviour demonstrates insight or remorse for their behaviour
- the alleged motive of the behaviour, including any alleged element of provocation.

We may implement all, or some, of the following responses to bullying behaviours:

- Offer wellbeing support, including referral to an external provider, to:
    - the target student or students
    - the students engaging in the bullying behaviour
    - affected students, including witnesses and/or friends of the target student.
- if appropriate facilitate a restorative practice meeting with all or some of the students involved. The objective of restorative practice is to repair relationships that have been damaged by bringing about a sense of remorse and restorative action on the part of the person who has bullied someone and forgiveness by the person who has been bullied. This approach is only suitable if students are involved voluntarily and demonstrate a willingness to engage in the process
- facilitate mediation between some or all of the students involved to help to encourage students to take responsibility for their behaviour and explore underlying reasons for conflict or grievance. Mediation is only suitable if all students are involved voluntarily and demonstrate a willingness to engage in the mediation process
- facilitate a Student Support Group meeting and/or Behaviour Support Plan for affected students

- implement disciplinary consequences for the students engaging in bullying behaviour, which may include removal of privileges, in school or external suspension and/or expulsion consistent with our *Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy*, the Ministerial Order on Suspensions and Expulsions and any other relevant Department policy
- prepare a Safety Plan or Individual Management Plan restricting contact between target and students engaging in bullying behaviour
- provide discussion and/or mentoring for different social and emotional learning competencies of the students involved
- monitor the behaviour of the students involved for an appropriate time and take follow up action if necessary
- implement targeted strategies to reinforce positive behaviours
- removal of access to the school's network and technology devices for a period of time.

The teacher dealing with the issue is responsible for maintaining up to date records of the investigation into and responses to bullying behaviour in Compass.

Plenty Parklands Primary School understands the importance of monitoring and following up on the progress of students who have been involved in or affected by bullying behaviour.

Our ability to effectively reduce and eliminate bullying behaviour is greatly affected by students reporting concerning behaviour as soon as possible, so that the responses implemented are timely and appropriate in the circumstances.

Again we emphasise the importance of not condoning unacceptable or bullying behaviour by being a bystander. Where appropriate, school staff will also endeavour to provide parents and carers with updates on the management of bullying incidents.

COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- Available publicly on our school's website
- Included in staff handbook/manual
- Discussed at staff briefings/meetings, as required
- Hard copy available from the school office upon request

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Statement of Values and School Philosophy
- Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Cybersafety and Responsible Use of Digital Technologies Policy
- Duty of Care Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy

Our school also follows Department of Education and Training policy relating to bullying including:

- Bullying Prevention and Response
- Cybersafety and Responsible Use of Digital Technologies
- Equal Opportunity and Human Rights - Students

The following websites and resources provide useful information on prevention and responding to bullying, as well as supporting students who have been the target of bullying behaviours:

- Bully Stoppers
- Report racism or religious discrimination in schools
- Kids Helpline
- ReachOut Australia
- Lifeline
- Bullying. No way!
- Student Wellbeing Hub
- eSafety Commissioner
- Australian Student Wellbeing Framework

EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years, or earlier as required following an incident or analysis of new research or school data relating to bullying, to ensure that the policy remains up to date, practical and effective.
Proposed amendments to this policy will be discussed to ensure we are responsive to student needs.

Data will be collected through:

- discussion and consultation with students and parent/carers
- staff surveys
- assessment of other school-based data, including the number of reported incidents of bullying in each year group and the effectiveness of the responses implemented
- Attitudes to School Survey
- Parent Opinion Survey

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	July 2022
Consultation	PPPS Staff Leadership School Council
Approved	August 2022
Next scheduled review date	July 2024